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# CLEMENCEAU VISITS ARGENTINA'S SUGAR FIELDS

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without the help of the bird from which direction the warm north wind blew. Finally, by way of putting a finishing touch to my education, he assumed that I was thirsty, and, leading me to a creeper growing on a large branch at the height of a man, he dexterously inserted his knife into the joint of the leaves, when there burst out a jet of water slightly aromatic in taste, like the juice of some fine grass. The traveler's sherbet! A few minutes later we came upon a peon mounted on his mule, who more clearly than either bird or lichen set us on the right path.

M. Hilleret's first sugar factory was established at Lulès. There we found a fine forest wilder still than that of Santa Ana, with gorgeous great trees bearing bouquets of flowers, some white, some pale violet, and some pink. Fine gardens and a park where, under the management of a French gardener, every fruit tree of the sub-tropical zone may be found, from the banana and coffee plant to the mango and chirimaya, besides a thousand other strange-named growths better calculated to surprise the eye than charm the palate. Of an evening there was dancing in the garden. Though national in character, dancing here is much what it is elsewhere, since there is but one way to move the arms and legs. The most striking part of the picture was the spectacle of the dancers when resting. In our countries, these assemblies of young people would have been the excuse for jokes and laughter, often probably carried to excess. Here the immovable gravity of the native makes such a scene impossible.

Young men and young women exchange now and then a few words uttered in a low voice with the utmost composure. On the invitation of the cavalier the young girl rises in exactly the same way that she would move to perform some household duty, and she goes through the rites of the dance, with its rhythmic gymnastics, without the vestige of a smile or a ripple of gayety on her expressionless face. It is not that dancing offers no attraction to them, for they never miss an opportunity to indulge in it. We must only see in their deportment a conception of dignity and a standard of conduct that are unlike our own.

On my return from Tucuman, a great reception was given by the French colony in my honor. I went to call, as indeed it behooved me, at the House of Independence, more modest, but no less glorious, than that of Philadelphia. It was here that the first national Congress was held, and here that the oath of independence was taken (July 9, 1816). In order to preserve the humble house, now an object of public veneration, it has been built into a large edifice, which will preserve it from decay in the future. There is no attempt at decoration. Some commemorative tablets only. But it is enough. When the heart responds readily to the call of duty, an unobtrusive reminder is all that is necessary.

I was infinitely touched by the grandiose reception given by the French colony. In a fine theatre which belongs to them the Frenchmen of Tucuman extended the warmest of welcomes to their fellow countryman. I found a surprise in store for me. It was arranged that I should lay the foundation stone of the new

French School of Tucuman, and if I am to believe the inscription which I found on the silver trowel used on the occasion that remains in my possession, the school will bear the name of him who was thus its first mason. This honor, which is wholly unmerited, sprang, of course, from the natural longing to attach themselves in any way to France. Not a word was spoken that was not an invocation to our country and its fight against ignorance, the origin of all human woes.

There was a large and fashionable company present, whose large befeathered hats proved that Tucuman is not so very far from Paris after all. The ceremony was concluded by a pretty march past of small boys and girls, carrying the Argentine and French flags, and singing the national hymn, the "Marseillaise." The little people put a world of spirit into their song. One little girl about two feet high and gayly beribboned, was very determined to vanquish "tyranny." How congratulate her? I tried to express the very sincere pleasure the scene had given me, and remarked that these little Argentine tongues had a slightly Argentine accent in the "Marseillaise."

"That is not surprising," said their master, who was obviously delighted. "They do not know a word of French." Then what about that charming baby's loudly expressed hatred of tyranny? \* \* \* It is true the significance of the hymn lies rather in the music than in the phraseology now a century old. Children, begin by learning French, and do not wait for the opening of the school whose first stone I have just laid. All the rest shall be added unto you.